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SARATOGA SPRINGS CONFERENCE

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PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS: CIVILIZATION

By THOMAS L. MONTGOMERY, *Librarian, Pennsylvania State Library, Harrisburg, Pa.*

I would not for a minute keep you in suspense in the adopting of such a title as I have given, nor alarm you with the thought that the whole of this meeting is to be given to a discussion of things from their beginnings. In the choosing of this title I have had in mind certain subjects that are interesting to me, tussocks, so to speak, in the oozy swamps of human activities, which enable one to bound lightly over the intervals of time and arrive at a triumphant conclusion within forty-five minutes. I hope to be pardoned for the few allusions that I make to my native state in a discourse of this kind. It is much better for a person of my limited horizon to speak of things with which I am familiar rather than to adopt sounding phrases dealing with ilimitable space.

If you will look in the dictionary as I have you will probably agree with me that the word "civilization" is the most unsatisfactory in the whole Webster concatenation. It bears very little relation to the word "civil" which precedes it and is even less satisfactory than the word "civilize" which follows it. Its definition contains no thought of charity, kindness, literature, music, nor goodness. It refers simply to advancement in the arts with a rather weak notion of refinement. Until it has been reorganized and rehabilitated it does not as a term deserve the respect of men. But grant that after this war is over it should be made to mean more, that some of the qualities which I have mentioned are included in its definition. Where should we look in the past for inspiration? The Egyptians were advanced in the arts but you would not seek it there, nor in Babylon, nor in Persia. Rome would give us little satisfaction and even Greece can

only inspire us with a few years of her history. Her wonderful literature, we are told by statisticians, was produced by some eighteen men only, nevertheless Greece was and is a satisfaction. In her architecture and in her sculpture the Greeks sought to make things more beautiful. It would have been impossible for a Greek to follow Rodin's example and depict "A man with a broken nose." True civilization was not found in the time of King John in spite of Magna Carta and all that meant to mankind. It was not much better after the introduction of the printed book, and in the times of Charles II. people were robbing each other and the government, and acting as if they were possessed of devils. Yet in the reign of the Merry Monarch a son was born to a distinguished man who was probably one of the worst grafters of his time, a child who was to become, in my humble opinion, the greatest contribution to civilization in the two hundred years that preceded and the two hundred years that followed that event. I allude to William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania.

His history is familiar to all of you. He is pictured in the beautiful series of paintings in the Pennsylvania Capitol as a student at Oxford where he had been sent to fit himself for the life of a courtier. He listens to the argument of the travelling Quaker and is impressed by the honesty and simplicity of his ways. Having adopted this faith he is driven from home by his irate father and is thrown into prison for his profane utterances. He is even shown writing tracts in his cell and upon his release visiting the prisoners and performing various kindnesses to the poor and neglected. Another picture shows him in the act of receiving the Charter for the

State of Pennsylvania from Charles II. Whenever Charles II. was not engaged in anything else he gave Pennsylvania to someone. Lord Baltimore thought the land belonged to him but Charles II. owed a large sum of money to Penn's father and this had to be liquidated whether Lord Baltimore liked it or not. The King jestingly alluded to Penn's ultimate consumption by the savages. He replied that he would have little trouble with them as he intended to buy their lands equitably. "Why," said the King in astonishment, "is not the land mine?" "No," replied Penn, "they are the original occupants of the soil and you have no more right to claim them by discovery than they would have for discovering Great Britain." His famous treaty with the Indians was never sworn to and never broken. Such was the influence which he exerted by his kindness, consideration and tact that for seventy years from the time of his coming there were neither wars nor even rumors of wars. Penn wrote to Thomas Holme, "When the great God brings me among you I intend to order all things in such a manner that we may live in love and peace one with another, which I hope the great God will incline both you and me to do." Even the Walking Purchase of 1737 did not in its rascality cause a break with the redskin, although by it the Delaware lost their most highly prized lands. It was not until the Indian learned that the white man could not keep his word that the Delaware, the Shawnee and the Mingo, oppressed from without by the unfriendly Iroquois and cheated from within, moved gradually westward, pressed by the throng of land-thirsty settlers who invariably by their association with the rum traffic made the Indian more savage than he had been before, and this disgrace has been perpetuated to the present time. The Indian has been routed out of each place assigned to him by the greed of those having charge of his affairs, but a kind Providence has always seen to it that the place to which he is banished provides riches for him in the form of mineral wealth or oil so that

he again becomes subject to the cupidity of those who should be his best friends. The utter absurdity of the provisions which allow an uneducated and brutal foreigner the full rights of citizenship and deny to the native American the right to dispose of his property except through a trustee, must be manifest to the crudest intellect. I like to think of American democracy as having had its birth at Valley Forge. It is impossible, however, to include the history of the Iroquois in such a conclusion. Its confederacy of five tribes, the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas and Senecas to which the Tuscaroras were afterwards added was associated under a plan which has lasted for more than three centuries and still exists today. Their importance is not due entirely to their early acquirements of firearms but to the wisdom of their system of government. The council of matrons, the construction of the clans (the members of which were not allowed to intermarry within the same clan) and their admittance of captured enemies to full tribal rights, all stamp them as of an advanced intelligence. Through a long series of years they held the balance of power between the French and English in America. They were good agriculturists and grew corn, tobacco and fruits. They also made splendid pottery and kept their public records upon wampum. Most certainly those who are interested in the equal rights of women must regard the Iroquois as a very advanced type of civilization. The limitation of descent belonged exclusively to the woman. A chieftain's son did not succeed him in office, but his brother. If there were no brother then a son of his sister or some descendant of the maternal line was chosen. When a decision had to be made it was by unanimous agreement. It was no wonder that such a people approved of Penn's League of Amity. Unfortunate as it was that warfare had to enter into the relations of the three nations, now joined together for the protections of the rights of man, these early contests with the Indians unquestionably developed a hardy

people whom even the sufferings of Valley Forge could not overcome, and the subsequent victory at Yorktown was due in no slight degree to the heroism engendered here in spite of privation and disease.

The free public school system forms another attractive stepping-stone in the path of general civilization. In my own state a system had prevailed for years of furnishing free schooling only to self-confessed paupers. This was based upon the old Friends' public school established in 1697, whereby the rich were schooled at reasonable rates and the poor for nothing. A class distinction was thus engendered which resulted in the poor people staying at home. Philadelphia was the first to cast aside this system and provide free schools at public expense. Agitation for the extension of this system finally culminated in an act of the legislature presented in 1834 which was passed with only one dissenting vote. On account of the taxation necessary for carrying out the act about one-half the districts rejected it and sent representatives to the legislature to have the law repealed. The Governor was told that any favorable consideration of the act on his part would result in his defeat for re-election. At this time there appeared upon the scene one who by his energy and ability immediately took front rank in the affairs of the Commonwealth. When I was a small boy I used to be told of the pithy remark of Mr. Chauncey Depew that the three great Pennsylvanians were Benjamin Franklin of Massachusetts, Albert Gallatin of Switzerland and Thaddeus Stevens of Vermont. Slightly worn by the repetition of this bon mot I remarked that I would like to add another, George Washington of Virginia. Whenever George Washington wished to do any thing he came to Pennsylvania. His expeditions through western Pennsylvania in 1753, 1754 and 1755 are well known. He was at Brandywine, Whitemarsh, Germantown and Valley Forge and while President of the United States he resided in Philadelphia, except during the short visits that he paid to New York. Incidentally I be-

lieve it is part of the education of every gentleman that he should pay short visits to New York. George Washington, however, seldom went to Virginia except to look after the crops or to attend a fox hunt.

The speech of Thaddeus Stevens in saving the free school act from defeat was one of the most masterly in his career. "If," said he, "the opponent of education were my most intimate and personal political friend and the free school candidate my most obnoxious enemy, I should deem it my duty, as a patriot, to forget all other considerations and I should place myself unhesitatingly and cordially in the ranks of him whose banner streams in light." People who had no children said that the tax was unjust to them, and he replied that the wealthy farmer was taxed to support criminal courts and jails, although never tried for a crime nor having enjoyed the hospitality of a prison. Of course, it was understood that a great part of the opposition to the free schools was on the part of the sectarian institutions, the projectors of which did not wish to be taxed for both.

Only second to the public schools has been the civilizing effect of our public library system. In some respects it is more important, for its influence extends from the cradle to the grave. I don't know whether it is a general feeling but I have myself an intense and loving respect for the men who first forwarded the idea of the free distribution of books. Of those of our guild who met in 1853, Mr. Lloyd P. Smith, Dr. W. F. Poole and Dr. Edward Everett Hale are the only ones whom I knew and of these Dr. Poole was the only one associated with the free library movement. It is wonderful, however, to think that such an assemblage of librarians could take place at that day. The opening remarks of the President show why. "To every one who knows the nature of the librarian's duties, the details which consume his days and render absence from his post impossible, except at the cost of severe labor on his return, it must be manifest that we have met at considerable

sacrifice. We obey some strong heartfelt impulse in incurring the expense of this gathering." How expensive it was may be gained from the report on salaries. Only twelve men at that time received for their services \$1,000 or upwards and the highest salary in the country was \$1,900, given to the state librarian of Massachusetts. Nevertheless we find these men going forth to spread the doctrine throughout the country and in 1876 they met almost spontaneously to form the association of which you and I are proud. It is no easy task to accomplish the results which have been attained by enthusiasm alone, yet such has been the fascination of our propaganda that it has increased in influence year by year with but one important gift to help the cause, and now in this year of the war we find ourselves the trustees of books and dollars by the million in the effort to preserve civilization in the soldiers' and sailors' rough life. This work has been well done. It has been well done because the former President of the Association had a thorough grasp of the situation and appointed a committee upon which it would have been very hard to improve, and that committee being thus intelligently

constituted knew that the Librarian of Congress should be given the widest latitude in prosecuting the work. I shall refrain from speaking of the events of the past year. The future I have consigned to one far abler than I, but I should like to bring this before you. After the war is over, where are the youths of the nations to assemble to accomplish their post-graduate work under competent supervision? It is not likely that they will submit themselves to the influence linked with the Prussian propaganda. England cannot receive them. France is far-spent. It may be that America may be called upon, with its great educational foundations, to provide a center for the students of the whole civilized world. God grant that she may prove equal to the demands which may be made upon her! It is evident that the German language is to be driven from our schools. I hope that Portuguese and Spanish may be substituted, so that we may understand our neighbors to the south and thus lead up to a United States of America extending from Tierra del Fuego to the Arctic Ocean, its citizens fighting shoulder to shoulder for the protection of the rights of man.

ADDRESS OF WELCOME

BY CHARLES B. ALEXANDER, *Regent of the University of the State of New York*

Conscious as I am of the honor accorded me as the representative of the Regents of the University of the State of New York, really representing the State of New York, of extending a word of welcome to this distinguished conference of the American Library Association, yet it is with a new spirit of appreciative understanding that I bring to you the greetings of the governing Board of our educational system.

I feel an added pride in greeting you in renowned and historic Saratoga. This region has a particular interest to us at this time when our minds are so often turning

for inspiration to the glories of our past history and to the heroes who made us a nation. This region, because of its wonderful water routes, has been the great strategic point in the wars waged for the control of this continent. The battles of Saratoga in 1777 and the surrender of General Burgoyne broke up the great campaign which was planned to sever and conquer the warring colonies; they aroused great enthusiasm throughout the country, and were the determining event which led France to form the alliance which assured our independence. George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, George Clinton and